

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figs. 2 and 4. This sheets replace the original sheets of Figs. 2 and 4. In Fig. 2, one of the element numbers "132" that indicates "a pipe" is replaced with --134--. In Fig. 4, one of the element numbers "140" that indicates "a wafer stage" is replaced with --145--.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks.

Objection

The Office Action objected to portions of the specification because of informalities. These objections have been addressed by amending the specification as shown above. Also, Figs. 2 and 4 have been amended as indicated above and attached herein addressing the objection to the drawings as indicated in the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully request that these objections be withdrawn.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-14 are originally pending in this application. Claims 8 and 9 are withdrawn from consideration. Among the remaining claims under consideration, claims 1, 10 and 12-14 are independent. By this amendment, independent claims 1, 10, 12 and 13 are amended. Claim 14 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 15-25 are added. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JPLO 7-301845 to Miwa ("Miwa").

Referring to Fig. 1 of Miwa, the Examiner equates, *inter alia*, the "diaphragm" 25 to the inventive "mechanism" of the present invention as in claim 1.

One of the aspects of the present invention as featured in claim 1 is directed to an exposure apparatus having a mechanism that allows the exposure light to enter into the reticle

and the optical system while preventing the exposure light from entering into the object in a standby mode. By selectively allowing and preventing (shielding) the exposure light for the different areas of the exposure apparatus, the invention improves the stability of the temperature distributions of the overall apparatus. Other rejected independent claims 10 and 13 recite similar features to claim 1 as discussed herein.

Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify that the mechanism prevents the exposure light completely. Other rejected independent claims 10 and 13 have been amended in a similar manner. The invention as featured in claims 1, 10 and 13 can provide an exposure apparatus that almost equalizes temperature distributions of its element between the exposure time and the non-exposure time thereby maintaining resolution and improving throughput.

As Applicant understands, there is nothing in Miwa that shows or suggests this aspect of the invention as discussed above, i.e., completely preventing the exposure light for the different areas of the exposure apparatus in a standby mode. The shielding member disclosed in Miwa is an aperture stop to obtain an aperture diameter, and does NOT shield the exposure light completely as specifically recited in claims 1, 10 and 13 as amended.

Accordingly, each of claims 1, 10 and 13 is believed neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of Miwa for at least the reasons discussed above.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 10 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,720,732 to Tsutsui ("Tsutsui").

Claim 12 recites similar features to claim 1 as discussed above, i.e., completely preventing the exposure light for the different areas of the exposure apparatus in a standby mode.

Tsutui appears to disclose a pattern transfer apparatus that transfers a pattern of a mask onto a wafer. In particular, Tsutui's apparatus includes means to control the temperature of the wafer held by a wafer chuck. Applicant notes that Tsutui's apparatus uses a fluid and controller for the temperature control. Tsutui, however, also fails to show or suggest at least one of the aspects of the present invention of claim 12 as discussed above, i.e., completely preventing the exposure light.

Accordingly, claim 12 is believed neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of the cited references (i.e., Miwa and Tsutsui), taken either alone or in combination, for at least the reasons discussed above as for claim 1.

Claim 14 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsutsui in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,768,627 to Kitabayashi et al. ("Kitabayashi").

As indicated above, claim 14 has been cancelled rendering the rejection directed to this claim moot.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Applicant has not individually addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicant submits that the independent claims from which they respectively depend are in condition for allowance as set forth above. Applicant however reserves the right to address such rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary.

Applicant believes that the application as amended is in condition for allowance and such

action is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claims 15-25 have been added to recite the claimed invention in an alternative manner. Specifically, new claims 15-25 commonly recite similar features to claim 1 as discussed above, i.e., "a mechanism for allowing the exposure light to enter the reticle and all of the plural optical elements in the standby mode, and for preventing the exposure light from entering the object in the standby mode."

Accordingly, Applicant believes that added claims 15-25 are allowable over the cited art of record for at least the similar reasons as for claim 1. For example, Miwa provides the shielding member at an inside of the optical system. Therefore, the shielding member of Miwa does not allow the light to enter all of the plural optical elements included in the optical system and prevent the light from entering the object as specifically required by new claims 15-25.

Applicant believes that the application including the new claims is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

AUTHORIZATION

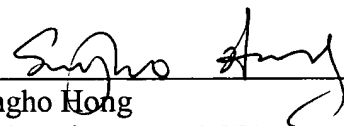
No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicant hereby petitions the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-5266). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: December 21, 2005

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